

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **2012 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 50**

#### **Fall Update # 8, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery**

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

#### **Fall Season Assessment**

The cumulative fall chum salmon total run size through September 7, based on run reconstruction, is approximately 959,244 fish. This is above the historical median of 624,182 fish for that date. The preliminary projected 2012 fall chum salmon run size is 960,000 fish.

Five pulses of fall chum salmon entered Yukon River in 2012. The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered the lower Yukon River on July 17 and was estimated to be 122,000 fish in size. Three additional pulses entered the lower Yukon River on July 25, July 31, and August 4 and were estimated to be 142,000, 35,500, and 43,000 fish in size. The fifth and largest pulse this season entered the river on August 16 and was estimated to be 212,000 fish in size.

Coho salmon passage peaked between August 19 and 23 and was estimated to be 65,000 fish in those five days. The cumulative passage by the Pilot Station sonar project through September 7, based on run reconstruction, is approximately 157,138 fish, which is below the historical median of 166,566 fish for that date.

#### ***Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing* – YDFDA, ADF&G**

ADF&G ceased conducting test fish drifts on August 28. YDFDA is continuing the drift project through September 15.

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through September 9 was 2,013, which is above the historical median of 1,150 for that date. The cumulative CPUE through September 9 for coho salmon was 408, which is above the historical median of 382 for that date.

***Mountain Village Drift Test Fishing*** - Asacarsarmiut Traditional Council and BSFA

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through September 9 is 1,106, which is below the historical median of 2,149 for that date. The cumulative CPUE for coho salmon through September 9 is 757, which is below the historical median of 1,075 for that date.

***Pilot Station Sonar Project*** - ADF&G

Pilot Station sonar project ceased operations for the season on September 7. The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through September 7 is approximately 682,871 fish, which is above the median passage of 594,060 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through September 7 is approximately 106,793 fish, which is below the median passage of 135,570 fish for that date.

***Rapids Test Fish Wheel Project*** - Zuray

The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE through September 9 is approximately 17,202 fish, which is below the historical median of 21,543 fish for that date. The cumulative CPUE based on adjusted water level is above the historical median for that date.

***Chandalar Sonar Project*** - USFWS

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through September 7 is approximately 89,239 fish, which is above the average passage of 74,603 fish for that date. The sonar project has not operated since August 8 because of high water level at the site. The current passage has exceeded the lower end of the biological escapement goal of 74,000-152,000 fall chum salmon.

***Sheenjek Sonar Project*** - ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through September 4 is approximately 26,531 fish, which is above the average passage of 18,229 fish for that date. The Sheenjek sonar project was not operated from September 5-9 because of high water level at the site. The project is once again operational and numbers are expected tomorrow.

***Tanana Test Fish Wheel Project*** - Moore

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through September 8 is approximately 11,680 fish, which is above the average of 4,368 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through September 8 is 2,677 fish, which is above the average of 555 fish for that date. The test fish wheel was not in operation from August 24 through August 28 because of mud flows at the site. Fish passage for those days has been estimated through interpolation.

***Eagle Sonar Project*** - ADF&G & DFO

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through September 9 is 30,244 fish, which is above the average passage of 22,842 fish for that date. Average cumulative passage, based on years of sonar operation, is 11% for this date.

***Stock Identification***

Fall chum salmon genetic samples processed from August 11 through August 22 (pulse 5) passage past Pilot Station sonar indicate that stocks represent approximately 42%, 32%, and 25% for Tanana, Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), and Mainstem Canada respectively. These proportions are above average for Tanana and Border/US and slightly below average for

Mainstem Canada based on the 2004-2011 dataset. The results from the last strata of genetic samples for this project from August 23-September 7 are expected later this week.

### **Age Composition**

The fall chum salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 28 was 0.8% age-3, 77.9% age-4, 18.4% age-5, and 2.9% age-6 fish. The average age-4 fish is 66.0% and average age-5 fish 31.5% for this date. The sample size was 1,069 fish for ages and 1,086 for gender. Females contributed 55.0% to the samples, which is below the average of 58.0%.

The combined fall chum salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 27) was 81.1% age-4, 16.4% age-5, and 1.8% age-6 fish. The sample size was 950 fish for ages and 959 for gender. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 53.7%.

The coho salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 28 was 29.6% age-3, 66.1% age-4, and 4.2% age-5 fish. The average age-3 fish is 14.5%, average age-4 fish is 77.5% and average age-5 fish 4.8% for this date. The sample size was 206 fish for ages and 210 for gender. Females contributed 47.6% to the samples, which is above the average of 44.8%.

The combined coho salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 27) was 15.3% age-3, 78.1% age-4, and 6.6% age-5 fish. The sample size was 415 fish for ages and gender. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 41.3%.

### **Fall Season Management**

In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a total run ranging from 950,000 to 1 million fish is adequate for escapement needs, full subsistence opportunity, and has a surplus available for other uses. Subsistence fishing is open 7 days per week in all mainstem districts (Districts 1-5).

### ***Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing***

Through September 10, thirteen fall commercial fishing periods have been announced in District Y-1, eleven periods in District Y-2, five periods in Subdistrict 4-A, four period in Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, and four periods in District 6. The commercial salmon fishing season in Districts Y-1 and Y-2 closes by regulation after September 10. Additional commercial fishing periods in the remaining districts and subdistricts will be dependent upon inseason run strength assessment and market interest.

#### **Preliminary harvest information for District Y-1:**

The cumulative harvest for Y-1 through September 9 is 139,236 fall chum and 39,638 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 71 fish.

#### **Preliminary harvest information for District Y-2:**

The cumulative harvest for Y-2 through September 9 is 127,947 fall chum and 29,250 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 34 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistrict 4-A:

Period #5: Subdistrict 4-A, 168 hours (6:00 p.m. September 2 until 6:00 p.m. September 9).  
403 fall chum, 0 coho, incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

The cumulative Subdistrict 4-A commercial harvest through September 9 is 1,214 fall chum salmon and the incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C:

Period #4: Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C, 120 hours (6:00 p.m. September 4 until 6:00 p.m. September 9). 0 fall chum, 0 coho, incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

The cumulative commercial harvest for Subdistricts 5-B and 5-C through September 9 is 1,384 fall chum salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 0.

Preliminary harvest information for District 6:

Period #2: District 6, 42 hours (6:00 p.m. September 3 until 12:00 noon September 5).  
930 fall chum, 40 coho, incidental harvest (not sold): 0 Chinook salmon.

Period #3: District 6, 42 hours (6:00 p.m. September 7 until 12:00 noon September 9).  
1,030 fall chum, 0 coho.

Period #4: District 6, 42 hours (6:00 p.m. September 10 until 12:00 noon September 12).  
No harvest information is available at this time.

The cumulative commercial harvest for District 6 through September 9 is 2,678 fall chum and 80 coho salmon.

***Subsistence Salmon Fishing***

Coastal District: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Districts 1, 2, 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller. Use of drift gillnets to harvest fall chum salmon is allowed in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point during open subsistence fishing periods.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 5-D: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River): This area includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays. In the Old Minto Area, subsistence fishing for salmon is open for one 5 day fishing period per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

Subdistricts 6-C (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River): This area includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha. Personal use salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates are available 24 hours a day at (907) 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Fairbanks ADF&G office at (907) 459-7274.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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